



U.S. Senator Judd Gregg, Chairman

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

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BILL TO PREVENT SPREAD OF WEST NILE VIRUS PASSES FULL SENATE

Washington, DC – Last night the Senate passed a bill that, if made into law, will help stop the spread of the threatening West Nile Virus this summer. The legislation, sponsored by Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, will help state and local governments control their summer mosquito population by directing federal money straight to the efforts of these local authorities. The bill, called the Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (MASH) Act, also directs the National Institutes of Health to continue research into the best ways to stop the insects and vermin that are responsible for spreading diseases like West Nile.

“Lots of rain this spring means that the West Nile Virus will once again be a threat this summer. We need this legislation in place immediately so local and state authorities can keep this year’s summer mosquito population under control, and therefore the risk of West Nile low. I commend the Senate for their quick passage of this legislation and I hope the House will do the same,” said Gregg.

“The West Nile Virus has no cure and no vaccine; prevention is the only intervention available. The threat posed by West Nile will be even worse this year. We need this bill signed into law because it targets prevention and puts money directly into local mosquito control efforts,” said Gregg.

The West Nile Virus, first discovered in Africa, spread to North America in 1999 showing up in New York City. The disease is spread by mosquitoes and can infect humans and other mammals, sometimes fatally. According to the Center for Disease Control, there were over 4,000 U.S. human cases of West Nile Virus and 284 deaths in 2002. The epidemic is expected to be even worse this year without effective mosquito control measures.

Summary of the MASH Act:

S. 1015, The Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (MASH) Act

- Provides \$100 million total in local grants to control the mosquito population – the bugs responsible for transmitting West Nile Virus.
- Creates grants for local governments to implement mosquito control programs.
- Creates grants for states to coordinate efforts within their state.
- Instructs the NIH to conduct research on how best to control insects and vermin responsible for spreading diseases like the West Nile Virus.

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